

Panhandle Health District

8500 N. Atlas Road Hayden, Idaho 83835
www.phd1.idaho.gov

Health District Watches over Bonners Ferry

By Cynthia Taggart
Panhandle Health District

Bonners Ferry—Panhandle Health District (PHD) protects the community's health like a parent watching over its family.

From preventing the spread of measles to detecting breast cancer and testing mosquitoes for nasty viruses that can sicken dozens or more, PHD focuses all its efforts on keeping the public as a whole as healthy as possible.

PHD has been a Bonners Ferry mainstay since the mid 1970s when the state Legislature created health districts. Since then, PHD has immunized children and adults, inspected food establishments for healthy practices and offered vaccine to protect the spread of flu among much more.

The services reach all ages and incomes. Infants often start their relationship with PHD when their mothers receive nutrition counseling and supplements through the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. Their grandparents and great-grandparents often use Home Health care services through PHD.

PHD's Home Health program in Bonners Ferry provides doctor-ordered registered nursing care for patients recovering from or living with health problems in their homes. The services include therapy, nutrition counseling and regular contact with the patient's doctor.

Home Health also offers Senior Companions for homebound seniors who need a little help staying in their own homes. Senior Companions are healthy older volunteers who help homebound, frail seniors with small chores, shopping, transportation to doctor's appointments and other activities at the same time they offer companionship.

For struggling families with infants, the health district offers guidance from a registered nurse. The nurse will visit families at home after a doctor, social worker, family, friend or other refers them for help for any reason.

PHD monitors development in infants so problems are detected early and immunizes them to protect them from disease. The immunization program also serves adults and includes vaccines for diseases in other parts of the world. Each fall and winter, the program offers seasonal flu shots.

Twice a month, PHD holds family planning clinics. The clinics offer help with birth control, breast exams, Pap smears, sexually transmitted disease testing and counseling. Rapid HIV tests are available by appointment. The tests provide results within 15 minutes.

Clinical services include breast and cervical cancer screening through Women's Health Check and Susan G. Komen for the Cure for financially eligible clients. PHD nurses work with a cancer support group and a diabetes support group that meet at the health district.

PHD staff investigates outbreaks to find their source, implement control measures and limit their spread. It issues permits for on-site septic systems and inspects small public water systems.